

MASA October 2008

Let's Put the Fun Back in Dysfunction: Reducing Conflict Among Adults in Schools

Session Description

- This session will detail strategies for accurate identification & remediation of adult conflict in schools & districts.
- Emphasis will be on the leader's role & using objective tools & strategies, & avoiding pop-psychology.
- Case studies will be presented & handouts detailing all tools & strategies will be given to participants.

Case Study #1

- **Miles' Bell Curve Theory**
- **Case #1: High School staff & administration**
 - 1) **Issues**
 - A) **10% buttheads had shot @ the Principal regularly**
 - B) **Sup did not know if Principal was in the wrong**
 - C) **Board did not know if Principal was in the wrong**

Case Study #1

2) Diagnosis

A) e-mail survey to all staff

- 1. What causes disagreement or conflict @ (HS)?**
- 2. Please identify 1 or 2 things that could be done @ (HS) to reduce the disagreements or conflicts.**

B) Survey Results (50 staff)

- 1. “That 10%”**
- 2. “Golden rule”**

Case Study #1

3) Work done by staff to improve the situation

- A) ID desired professional communication styles & behaviors**
- B) ID sources of conflict @ (HS)**
- C) ID desired professional behaviors to be used during conflict**
- D) ID desired leadership style from Principal**
- E) Evaluate this session**

Why Teams Fail

Although many say team-based pay is critical to the success of teamwork in the workplace, most teams fail for far less expensive reasons.

Why managers say teams failed to meet expectations:

Goals unclear	XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX 55%
Changing objectives	XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX 55%
Lack of accountability	XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX 51%
Lack of management support	XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX 49%
Lack of role clarity	XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX 47%
Ineffective leadership	XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX 45%
Low priority of team	XXXXXXXXXXXX 40%
No team-based pay	XXXXXX 30%

(USA Today - Tuesday, February 25, 1997: The Hay Group)

Current Stress Factors In Schools

- **Competition**
- **Low pay**
- **Poor working conditions**
- **Tight resources**
- **Lessened mobility**
- **Growth in part-time positions**
- **High self-expectations**

5 Categories: Difficult People In Schools

- **Attention seekers**
- **Control players**
- **Concealers**
- **Innovative malcontents**
- **Revengeurs**

Causes of Conflict In Schools

Cause #1: Conflict Resulting From Lack of Focus

Cause #2: Conflict w/ Philosophy & Practices

Cause #3: Interpersonal Conflict

Cause #4: Conflict re: Leadership/Followership

Cause #5: Conflict From Bad Behavior

Better Diagnosis Methods

- **Choice #1: Open-ended, qualitative surveys**
- **Choice #2: Focus groups**
 - 1) *Must have an agenda*
 - 2) *Must have a tool to focus the session*
 - A) Outcome Diagnosis Worksheet (handout)
 - B) Research Outline (handout)
- **Do not:**
 - 1) Ask questions at a staff meeting
 - 2) Ask any question that will allow buttheads to control the floor

Case Study #2

1) Issues

- A) Sup was tired of ineffective / butthead board behaviors
- B) Board was getting too much “Coffee Shop” info & opinions
- C) Board was micromanaging

2) Diagnosis

A) e-mailed survey to board

1. What 2 or 3 items are working well in the district?
2. What 2 or 3 items need to be improved?

** No emphasis on individual wrongdoing, asked about the bigger picture*

Case Study #2

3) Work done by Board & Sup to improve the situation

A) Planning

(handout)

- 1. Outcome Diagnosis**
- 2. Vision & Mission**
- 3. Priorities**
- 4. Goals**
- 5. Detailed workplans & agreement**
- 6. Review of next steps**

Data
(Hard data & soft data)

The diagram is a funnel shape, wider at the top and narrower at the bottom, divided into five horizontal sections. The top section is the widest and contains the text 'Data (Hard data & soft data)'. The second section is narrower and contains 'Vision (A new, perfect destination)'. The third section is narrower still and contains 'Mission (Job description to get there)'. The fourth section is the narrowest of the funnel sections and contains 'Priorities (Essential Items)'. The bottom section is a rectangular box, the narrowest of all, and contains 'Detailed Work Plans'. The background of the entire diagram is a light blue color with several diagonal stripes of a darker blue shade.

Vision
(A new, perfect destination)

Mission
(Job description to get there)

Priorities
(Essential Items)

Specific Goals

***Detailed
Work
Plans***

Outcome Diagnosis Worksheet

Positive

Less Than Positive

Intended

1)

1)

2)

2)

3)

3)

4)

4)

5)

5)

Unintended

1)

1)

2)

2)

3)

3)

4)

4)

5)

5)

Sample Vision Statements: School Districts

Columbia Heights (MN) Public Schools

Achieve academic & cocurricular excellence, high student & staff morale, in partnership with our diverse community.

Sun Prairie (WI) Public Schools

We will work together with our community to maximize all students' learning by providing a community of learners an adaptable system that provides equitable opportunities for a diverse population.

Scotland (SD) Public Schools

We will provide excellent academics & co-curriculars that develop lifelong learning, high academic achievement, & productive citizens that are prepared to move on to the next level of education.

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(Hard data & soft data)

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Vision
(A new, perfect destination)

Mission
(Job description to get there)

Priorities
(Essential Items)

Specific Goals

***Detailed
Work
Plans***

Priorities Worksheet

(Write your organization's new Vision here.)

(Write your organization's new Mission here.)

Step #3: Identify between 4 & 6 Priorities.

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)
- 4)
- 5) *(Optional)*
- 6) *(Optional)*

Priorities to Goals Worksheet

Priority #1

Goal
Goal
Goal

Priority #2

Goal
Goal
Goal

Priority #3

Goal
Goal
Goal

Priority #4

Goal
Goal
Goal

Priority #5

Goal
Goal
Goal

Priority #6

Goal
Goal
Goal

“Chainsaw Planning”© Worksheet

Admiration of the Problem (ID all sub-issues & hurdles; 5 minutes)

Refine The Goal (in 20 words or less; 5 minutes)

Develop 4 or Fewer Objectives (10 minutes)

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)
- 4)

Timeline

Resources

Responsibility

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)
- 4)

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)
- 4)

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)
- 4)

Develop an Evaluation Method (Quantitative or Qualitative, 5 minutes)

Thanks!

Enjoy the rest of the Conference!

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